

**Final Meeting Notes  
LCR MSCP Steering Committee Meeting  
April 28, 2021**

Attending Via Video Conference Call

Dave Alba	Bert Bell	Dee Bradshaw
Linda Carbone	Julie Carter	Gil Cristobal
Chuck Cullom	JR Echard	Jess Gwinn
Brian Henry	Mike Hulin	Matt Jeppson
Jamie Kelly	Jimmy Knowles	Bill Lamb
Rene Latu	Linda Levine	Lisa Luptowitz
Kara Matthews	Craig McGinnis	Aaron Mead
Terry Murphy	Jess Newton	Wade Noble
William Patterson	Sara Price	Shana Rapoport
Carrie Ronning	Dana Sedig	Seth Shanahan
Stevie Sharp	Tina Shields	Catherine Sites
AJ Slagan	Jon Sjoberg	Jim Stolberg
John Swett	Ruth Valencia	Laura Vecerina
David Vigil		

**1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

Introductions

The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m. by Seth Shanahan.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and an update on critical habitat designation for the northern Mexican gartersnake was added. The agenda was approved (Moved by Sara Price, seconded by Chuck Cullom, and adopted by consensus).

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

Approve October 28, 2020 Meeting Notes

The October 28, 2020 Meeting Notes were approved with a minor edit (Moved by Chuck Cullom, seconded by Kara Mathews, and adopted by consensus).

## Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Seth Shanahan was nominated by Jon Sjoberg, seconded by Dee Bradshaw, to continuing serving as Steering Committee Chair. Chuck Column was nominated by Dee Bradshaw, seconded by Dana Sedig, to serve as Vice-Chair. The motion for Chair and Vice-Chair was approved and adopted by consensus.

## **2. WORK PLAN AND BUDGET**

**FY20 Accomplishment:** John Swett provided an overview of FY20 accomplishments. He noted that the required program funding for FY20 was \$33,268,164 and that the Steering Committee had approved a budget of \$27,104,814. Actual accomplishment was \$27,945,122.67. John noted that actual accomplishment was over the approved amount by \$840,308.67. This was due to the Planet Ranch Construction schedule being compressed from 3 years to 2 years and the purchase of road base for the Yuma Meadows Conservation Area in FY20 that had been scheduled for FY21. John noted that although actual accomplishment was over the approved budget, it was still below the required program funding level.

John noted that \$1,194,796 had been contributed to the Remedial Measures Fund, bringing the total in the fund with interest to \$10,242,242.64. The total amount in the Habitat Maintenance Fund with interest is \$35,741,432.17. No funding was contributed to the Land and Water Fund in FY20. The current balance in the Land and Water Fund is \$5,670,000.

The group managers presented accomplishments from their FY20 program. The power point presentation will be included as part of the Final Meeting Materials, which will be posted to the website.

**Proposed FY22 Program:** John Swett noted that the preliminary inflation rate for FY21 is 1.563. This results in minimum required program funding for FY22 of \$31,231,866. John noted that Reclamation is proposing a program of \$25,436,782. John said that the program that Reclamation is proposing for FY22 is very similar to last years' program. He noted that the biggest portion of the budget is for conservation area development. Because of limited construction capacity, the proposed FY22 program is less than the required amount. He said that any non-federal funds that are not spent will be held in the state contributed funds account for future use.

Chuck Cullom asked when program expenditures would match required funding commitments. John noted that Table 7-1 in the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) shows a sharp decline in the budget starting in FY26. The HCP schedule for habitat creation anticipated creation of land cover through FY30. He noted that there is a disconnect between Table 7-1 funding requirements and the habitat creation construction schedule. He said that a solution is to set aside the funds now so that there will be funding available starting in FY26 to complete construction of the conservation areas. Chuck requested that an analysis be done to understand the future funding requirements and proposed expenditure trajectory. Seth Shanahan noted that

this item could be placed on the agenda at a future Steering Committee meeting. John also noted that the program had federal funding carryover in FY20, and will in FY21, due to COVID restrictions.

**Draft FY22 Work Plan and Budget Review Schedule:** John noted that the Work Group meeting to review the Draft Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2022 Work Plan and Budget, Fiscal Year 2020 Accomplishment Report is scheduled for May 12-13 and would be held again as a conference call. Written comments should be sent to Laura Vecerina by May 10<sup>th</sup>. He noted that the Final Report will be posted to the website by June 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. PROCESS UPDATES**

Seth Shanahan provided an update on the White Paper commitments. He noted that last summer the Steering Committee authorized a small group to provide additional information to the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on the 2019 description of take in the FY21 Work Plan. That information was developed into a White Paper and provided to the FWS. Seth noted that the White Paper had outlined a future process for closer coordination with the FWS. It had been agreed that the small group would meet with the FWS twice a year, in December and May, to review the description of take, specifically the potential reductions in flow. Seth noted that the small group met with the FWS in December 2020 to review the preliminary 2020 reductions in flow. At that meeting, the preliminary 2020 reductions in flow were reviewed and there did not appear to be any concern over exceeding reduction in flow limits. Seth noted that a meeting is scheduled with the FWS tomorrow to review the draft final 2020 reduction in flow amounts. The draft final 2020 reduction in flow numbers are also within the flow reduction limits. Seth noted that the White Paper had also included a longer term commitment to explore future levels of compliance. Seth noted that conversations have been continuing, but there has not been any additional updates.

### **4. GENERAL**

John provided an update on the status of critical habitat designation for the yellow-billed cuckoo. He noted that the FWS had published a final rule that will be effective on May 21, 2021. He said that the LCR MSCP planning area had been excluded from the critical habitat designation. He noted that Section 4(b)(2) of the Endangered Species Act allows for the exclusion of areas from critical habitat if there is an existing conservation program in place. John also noted that the FWS had just put out a public notice that the critical habitat for the northern Mexican gartersnake had been finalized. It appears that it will also exclude the LCR MSCP planning area, including the Bill William River, from critical habitat designation. Both designations will not have an impact on the program.

## **5. STEERING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE**

John noted that the next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup>. At that meeting, the Steering Committee will approve the Final Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2022 Work Plan and Budget, Fiscal Year 2020 Accomplishment Report. The report will be posted to the LCR MSCP website by June 16<sup>th</sup> for Steering Committee review. John noted that the fall Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup>. He noted that a Work Group Meeting would be scheduled in September if needed.

## **6. SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS**

Seth reviewed the items that the Steering Committee had taken action on. These included approving the agenda and the October 2020 meeting notes, and the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair. Seth also asked if there were suggestions for agenda items for future Steering Committee meetings. He noted that Chuck Cullom had requested information on future funding and expenditures in the state contributed funding accounts. Bill Lamb requested a future agenda topic on the drought and how that may impact the program. Dave Alba asked if there was a glossary for technical terms that could be provided. Seth also noted that presenters could also define acronyms before using them.

## **7. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.